REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Final Office Action dated 30 January 2012.

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to more distinctly claim the invention. The Examiner's reconsideration of the rejection in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3, 7-15 and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watson, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,565,678) (hereinafter 'Watson') in view of Hoang (U.S. Publication No. 2002/9949980) (hereinafter "Hoang").

The Examiner states that Hoang makes up for the deficiencies in Watson as noted in the prior office actions. The applicants respectfully disagree. Hoang solves the technical problem of "controlling the access of a client's STB to DOD programs without using bi-directional communications" (see, e.g., paragraph [0005]). Hoang discloses a system for preventing a client's set top box from displaying data sent to the client's STB from a data server. That is, data being received from the data server for which the STB does not have permissions to view is blocked. It accomplishes this by sending subscription codes to a set top box. The set top box prevents a user from accessing the incoming data streams if the subscription codes do not permit user access. Hoang does not disclose preventing a user from accessing information stored locally, and does not, in any form, prevent a user from accessing network settings as found in claim 1.

It is worthwhile to restate that the present application is directed to protecting the service provider's ability to provide network connections to the access device. "Service provider 100 may maintain a secured system, that is, access to service provider 100 is limited. In addition, information stored on service provider's systems may include information of a sensitive nature, which even end users need to be prevented from accessing. ... Referring to FIG. 2 with continued reference to FIG. 1, service provider 100 (FIG. 1) retains control of which information elements can be revealed to an end user or subscriber; thereby enabling the service provider to

maintain security over the information elements which may enable the end user to compromise the service provider system's integrity if revealed to end users" (Page 4, lines 14-32).

The Examiner remarks that "Hoang teaches "*wherein the service provider maintains a level of integrity to allow it to provide network access to an access device*" (language referencing claim 1 of the present application). This is mentioned to be taught in paragraph [0049] of Hoang which "teaches subscription level information for clients, maintained by the DOD system." The subscription levels and codes in Hoang allow access to data and data services transmitted from a DOD data server to a client set top box. Subscriptions are sent to set top boxes along with embedded hardware identifiers. The set top boxes only review subscriptions that contain their unique hardware identifier. Thus, the set top box maintains a level of access to incoming data streams using the subscriptions. This is in *sharp contrast* to claim 1 which claims maintaining a level of integrity to allow network access by modifying stored network connection information on an access device. Hoang regulates incoming data stream access but does not disclose how to protect the network connection itself. Nor does it disclose how to even protect the subscription information that controls the data access. If the client accesses the subscription information, the data streams access can be compromised. Hoang only offers a means to control data streamed from a data server. Hoang does not disclose any means to protect the provider itself.

The Examiner further states that Hoang "teaches an STB being updated with subscription level information, this update would be a modification of the network connection information" at paragraphs [0069]-[0072]. The Examiner states that this is equivalent to claim 1's feature of "*a control mechanism disposed at a location of the service provider which accesses each of the access devices to modify stored network connection information on a corresponding access device of a corresponding end user and thereby remotely designate portions of the information as service provider-accessible only to prevent compromise of the service provider's integrity by the corresponding end use.*" Network connection information is the information required to establish and/or maintain a network connection (e.g., a communication means). It is not information to determine which files can be accepted by a set top box as taught in Hoang. Those files would be sent over the network connection. Thus, Hoang does not teach a modification of the network connection information on an access device by a control mechanism disposed at a location of the network provider as claimed in claim 1 of the present application.

Therefore, Watson and Hoang, singly and/or in combination, do not teach the features of independent Claims 1 and 11. Applicants believe that Claims 1 and 11 and their dependent claims are in condition for allowance and request that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims be allowed to issue.

Claims 4-6 and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watson in view of Hoang and in further view of Benhammou, et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,991,519 (hereinafter "Benhammou").

Both Hoang and Benhammou fail to cure the deficiencies of Watson as stated above, singly or in combination. Since claims 4-6 and 16-18 depend from independent claims 1 and 11, they contain allowable features as well. Thus, Applicants believe that claims 4-6 and 16-18 are now in condition for allowance and request that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims be allowed to issue.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully request that the rejections of the claims set forth in the Final Office Action of 30 January 2012 be withdrawn, that pending claims 1-21 be allowed, and that the case proceed to early issuance of Letters Patent in due course.

It is believed that no additional fees or charges are currently due. However, in the event that any additional fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the application, they may be charged to applicant's representatives Deposit Account No. 07-0832.

Respectfully submitted,

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